

Truth, fairness victims in fight over power plant

The debate on whether to build two new coal-fired power plants in Holcomb, west of Garden City, has dragged the state into emotion, hyperbole, corporate politics, exaggeration, greed and maybe a little mudslinging.

Some may think the real issue is global warming, but the battle is far more complex. People take sides based mostly on their environmental faith and political belief.

But giant corporations know it's about money. And they play to win.

Full-page ads began appearing last week in a few Kansas newspapers, touting either wind energy or natural gas as an alternative to the supposedly dirty coal plant.

But while it's true that the environmentalist Sierra Club is among the leaders opposing the coal plants, big money for some ads has come from an Oklahoma natural gas producer.

The copy claims Kansas will get "all the pollution" from the two proposed coal plants, while the owners export most of the power to other states. Of course, the same could be said of the General Motors auto plant in Kansas City or the Goodyear tire plant in Topeka.

In fact, the principal owner, Hays-based Sunflower Electric Power, is a cooperative owned by western Kansas farmers and rural residents through their rural electric co-ops. One of them is PrairieLand Electric out of Norton. Sunflower, which operates a smaller generating plant in Holcomb, says it believes the new plants will be "carbon neutral," producing no net increase in greenhouse gases once in operation.

The opponents never mention that. Nor the fact that Sunflower's principal partner is a Colorado "generation and transmission" co-op, Tri-State, which could presumably build in Colorado, where any pollution would drift mostly into Kansas.

Some ads tout wind power as an alternative to the coal-fired plants, ignoring the fact that wind power is at best a supplement to fixed-load plants, nuclear, coal-fired or gas. The wind only blows part of the time, and we have no technology to store large amounts of power.

Environmentalists have blocked construction of nuclear plants in this country for nearly three decades, despite an enviable safety record. Opposition based on the deadly, eternal nature of nuclear waste makes some sense.

Ads which appeared Sunday bore the signature of Know Your Power, billed as "a growing coalition of concerned doctors, health organizations, educators, citizens, businesses and students."

And natural-gas producers, apparently. The ads tout "clean-burning, domestically produced" natural gas as cutting carbon emissions in half.

Profitable for Oklahoma, too.

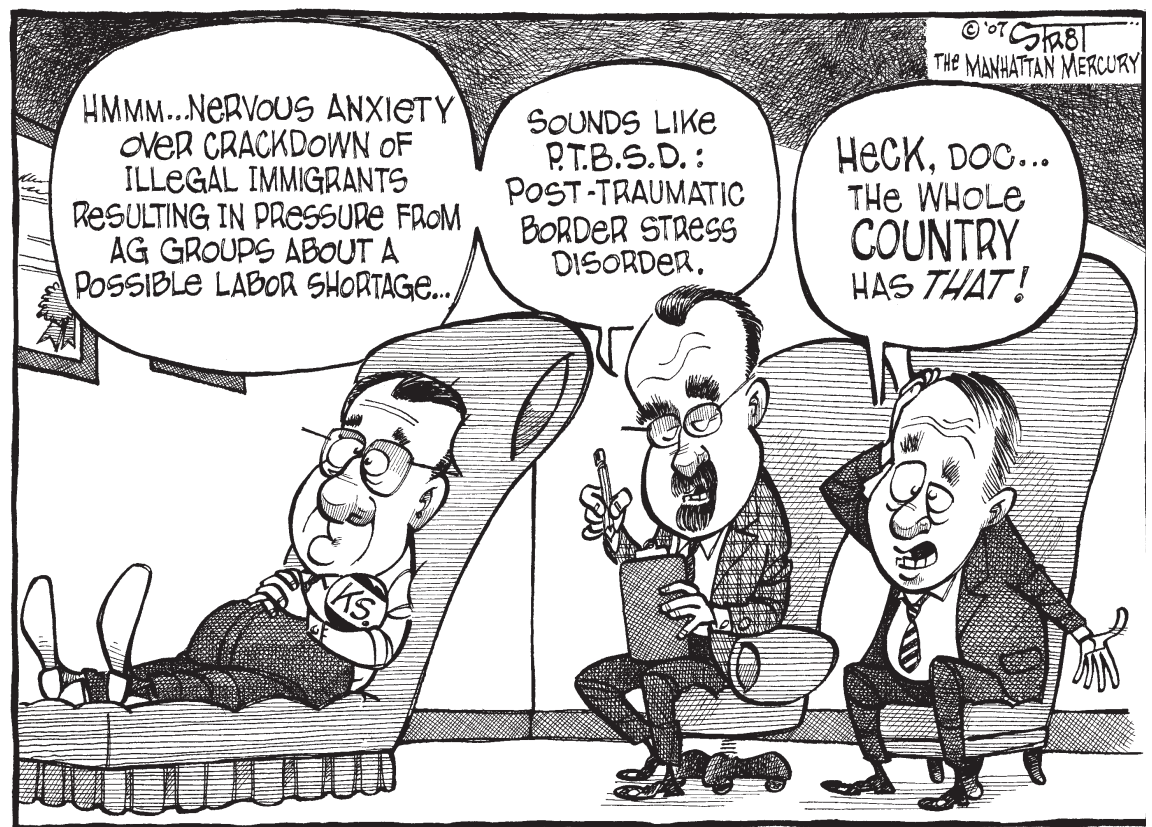
It'd been good to hear out the pros and cons of these plants in a fair, honest fight. That's not going to happen.

Our view: The nation is going to need this power. If Sunflower can produce coal power in a "carbon neutral" system, the state of Kansas should issue permits for the Holcomb plants.

Southwest Kansas wants and needs the jobs they will provide, just as Kansas City and Topeka need GM and Goodyear jobs. Colorado needs the power; so do we.

Someday, perhaps, we'll learn to make power from manure and wind and hydrogen, and be able to store the wind for use tomorrow. Then, we can depend on winds and pigs for power.

That's not going to happen next year, is it?
— Steve Haynes



400 years later, colony found

In the spring of 1607, the first permanent English settlement was made at Jamestown in what came to be called Virginia.

Although the settlement was named after the Virginia Co. of London — after Elizabeth, the supposedly virgin queen — there were no women in that first group of settlers, which comprised 104 men and boys in three ships — the Susan Constant, the Goodspeed and the Discovery.

Half the crew were laborers, artisans and craftsmen. The other half were gentlemen, mostly unused to hard labor but good with weapons.

It was sort of like having a town where half the citizens are in the legislature.

After months at sea, the colonists set their new home on a swampy, dismal coast far from home, among unfriendly natives, but away from even unfriendlier Spaniards, who already had colonized parts of the New World.

Much later Washington, D.C., would be established as the nation's capitol in another swampy, dismal area of Virginia. As a country, we try to stick to what we're good at.

The job of the colonists was to set up a camp and find something worth sending back to England — preferably gold and silver.

The colonists found no gold or silver and most of the English crops they tried failed. Finally, tobacco, a product many Americans might prefer had never been discovered, became the colony's best cash crop.

Jamestown didn't exactly flourish in those early days, and even after women arrived in 1608, things were tough.

Life was hard and the natives



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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weren't friendly. Supply ships were wrecked and the colony was in dire straits.

The winter of 1609-1610 is called "the starving time," and the colony was nearly abandoned when supplies arrived that spring.

I'm sure it was sort of like Washington on April 15, when everyone has to pay their income taxes — all those long, dry months and then suddenly it rains money.

The first settlers' Indian problems were solved temporarily when Pocahontas, the chief's daughter, was captured and held hostage.

Pocahontas converted to Christianity and married one of the settlers, John Rolfe. Today we call this the Stockholm Syndrome.

However, her joining the settlers helped bring peace between them and the Indians for about 10 years — enough time to plant Englishmen firmly on American soil.

Within a few decades, most of the native Americans in the area had been pushed out, killed or died of foreign diseases like smallpox and measles.

When I was in school, I learned most of this. But everyone thought Jamestown had been lost to the ages. Historians thought the site of the original colony had been washed away. The wooden stockade and buildings were gone. It was believed the site had become part of the

James River. Then in 1994, archaeologist William Kelso decided instead of assuming the colony site was under water, he would do something novel — he'd dig around the area where the colony was believed to have been.

He started in an area where the foundations of a church could be seen. He believed that the church played a central role in the lives of the colonists. In those days you went to church or you went to jail, and if you went to the wrong church, you still went to jail. He felt that the church would have been inside the fort, believing the colonists would not want to go several miles to church when the woods were full of unfriendly natives.

That hunch proved to be right, and he soon uncovered dark, round stains in the soil left by the palisade logs. Further excavation determined that most of the Jamestown site was not in the river, but still on dry land, and since then thousands of artifacts have been uncovered. Many are on display at a new museum there.

Now on its 400th birthday, Jamestown is impressive, with archeologists working on the original site, and a reproduction with costumed re-enactors just down the road for those who prefer their history more lifelike.

Mission gives her a purpose

Sleeping bag: check. Air mattress: check. Pillow: check. Yes, it's Mexico Mission Trip time again.

Since I'm the head cook, my list also includes pots and pans, salt and pepper, bowls and utensils. Once we're on the road, I can relax. It's just getting to that stage.

Lots of details to cover. Thank goodness I don't have to remember it all. Ed, who is making his third trip, volunteered to take care of the church's van. His wife restocked our first-aid kit, and he will see to it that the van is serviced and ready to roll.

Jim takes care of our bags and bedding. All I have to do is pile my things in the front room. He makes it all fit.

And then our church family helps by providing us with groceries. Using our menu for the trip, I make up a shopping list and post it on the office window at church. By the time we leave, everything should be waiting for us at the church.

One lady from our congregation always sends us off with warm, fresh-from-the-oven cinnamon rolls. What a blessing to know there are those who care so much to help others. Thanks, Mary.

Our friend and neighbor Barbara takes care of the home place while



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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we're gone. The cats love her and she kinda likes them, too, I think. She tolerates the chickens, but doesn't mind the fresh eggs which are part of her "pay" for the week.

Blackie and Brownie, the bottle calves we started earlier this spring, will make the one-way trip to the sale barn Thursday. They are good-looking critters and hopefully the market will stay up.

This last week at work will be the killer: the regular work week, plus writing "stuff" in advance for next week. Building a house in Mexico in three days will be a vacation after the work of getting ready to leave.

We've dusted off our Spanish books and are practicing rolling our R's in words like "tortilleria" and "gracias." We're trying to teach the children accompanying us how to sing "Jesus Loves Me" in Spanish. Since we stay in a Mexican church while in Juarez, we want to attend

services there if possible.

We have been asked why we keep doing this. It's pretty simple, really.

We have been saved to serve. Someday, we won't be able, but until then, we are compelled to.

What is your purpose?

From the Bible

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.
I Corinthians 13:3



State spending will hit wallet

It's not hard to see that Kansas is heading for yet another budget crisis, with spending expected to outstrip state expenses by \$532 million this year and \$252 million next time.

Kansas has been living on the state's savings — and on increased revenue brought in by economic good times — every since the Legislature promised an extra \$1 billion a year for schools.

Other costs, especially the Medicaid program, which covers medical bills for welfare clients and other low-income citizens, are on the increase. The governor and Legislature pushed selective tax cuts to make the state more competitive when attracting businesses. Colleges and universities want money to fix crumbling buildings.

The result: while the state finished the 2007 fiscal year on June 30 with more than \$900 million in reserves, after two years of heavy deficit spending, that "bank account" should be down to \$150 million or less by June 30, 2008.

In a rising economy, that might support current state spending. Might.

But state spending never stays current. It goes up 5 to 7 percent a year, every year, far faster than your paycheck.

In the next couple of years, the state has to write a new transporta-



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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tion program. Prospects are not good. The first two highway plans brought the state road system up to standard, but that included borrowing hundreds of millions. Those bonds have to be paid now, and they'll eat a huge portion of the transportation budget.

Sustaining good roads, building new ones and paying the loans will require money, lots of it, and the state already is spending more than it takes in.

Good times feed more spending, but good times never last.

The last couple of years, state revenue has exceeded budget estimates by millions. When the economy turns around, so will the state's income.

And that's liable to happen about the same time as the highway fund runs out. The state is coming to the end of a 10-year road program formulated under Gov. Bill Graves. Something has to be done, or the progress won under the first two programs will be lost.

Associated Press Topeka correspondent John Hanna laid out the details of the state's deficit spending in a Monday feature more than a week ago. While not technically illegal — the state has the cash in its reserves — the practice is shaky. The picture is sunny today only because the state is prosperous.

History shows state revenue runs in cycles, and this uptick may be about over.

State spending never declines, though. It has two forward speeds. In good times, the governor and Legislature, driven by incessant demand, spend lots. In tough times, they spend only a little less.

So be prepared. When demand for state spending hits the wall, the spenders will come looking for more money. They'll be looking in your pocketbook, even though in a downturn, there won't be much there.

The state won't cut its spending. And that spells a Tax Increase for you.

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